

Backpacks

Pack them Light, Wear them Right

Do you have these symptoms after wearing a backpack?

Aching back and shoulders, weakened muscles, tingling arms or stooped postured.

Carrying too much weight in a pack or wearing it incorrectly can lead to these problems.

The American Occupational Therapy Association has the following recommendations for parents and schools:

How to load a backpack

Never carry more than 15% of your body weight. (A person that weighs 100 lbs, shouldn't wear a pack over 15 lbs.)

Load heaviest items closest to your back (the back of the pack).

Arrange books and supplies so they won't slide around the pack.

Consider using a backpack on wheels.

Hand carry extra items, i.e. lunch boxes, projects.

Select a pack with well-padded shoulder straps (shoulders and necks have many nerves and blood vessels that can cause tingling and pain when too much pressure is applied.)

How to wear a backpack

Adjust the straps so that the back pack fits snugly to your back.

Wear the waist belt. This helps distribute the pack weight more evenly.

The bottom of the pack should rest in the curve of the lower back. It should never rest more than 4 inches below the waist.

Choose the right size pack for your back.

(Taken from "The Sun", written by Susan Mac, Home Health Network)